

WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,
and workers in the District of Columbia*

Friday, December 5, 2003

CHIEF RAMSEY EXTENDS CRIME INITIATIVE UNTIL EARLY JANUARY

Chief Ramsey has decided to extend for another month a successful Crime Initiative that has helped to reduce crime over the past 90 days. In late August, Chief Ramsey announced the emergency Crime Initiative in response to spikes in crime that were occurring in all seven police districts. Commanders were directed to identify the top crime problems in their districts and to develop strategies for addressing those problems. The Chief also suspended the scheduling provisions (Article 24) of the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Fraternal Order of Police, giving commanders greater flexibility in assigning personnel to carry out their crime-fighting strategies. Under the initiative, commanders can adjust schedules without providing officers with the usual 14-day notice. This week, the Chief announced that the Crime Initiative would continue until January 5, 2004. During the first 90 days after the initiative was announced, the District experienced a 14 percent decrease in overall crime when compared with the 90 days prior to the initiative, according to preliminary statistics. When compared with the same 90-day period of 2002, crime over the first 90 days of the Crime Initiative was down 12 percent, including a 35 percent decline in homicides. Individual districts have also seen some positive trends in addressing their specific crime targets, although the Chief indicated that districts still have work to do in achieving their crime-reduction goals. He also said the Crime Initiative was being extended for one more month so that the MPDC could be in a better position to address some of the crimes that typically occur during the December holidays. Ramsey noted that although the Crime Initiative gives commanders greater flexibility to adjust schedules, most of the staffing changes have been achieved without widespread disruptions to officers' schedules.

- ① For more information about the crime-fighting goals and strategies in your community, contact your local district commander. To learn what district you live in, go to:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/districts.shtm>

STREET CRIMES UNIT TACKLES SERIOUS CRIME IN 3D

As part of its implementation of the Crime Initiative, the Third District organized a 24-officer Street Crimes Unit to tackle serious drug and gun crime in targeted areas of 3D. The unit is made up entirely of officers who have volunteered for the crime-fighting assignment. They work the "power shift," generally from 6 pm to 2:30 am, because this is one of the busiest periods for street crime in 3D. They use up-to-date crime data to identify areas needing the greatest attention, and coordinate with PSA teams, detectives and other police resources in 3D. Headed by Lieutenant Diane Groomes, the Streets Crimes Unit was responsible for more than 100 felony arrests and 300 misdemeanor arrests during its first several weeks, beginning September 1. More than half of the felony arrests were for drug and gun crimes. Unit members also recovered 21 firearms and one paint gun, as well as significant quantities of cocaine, marijuana, heroin, PCP and OxyContin pills. Third District Commander Larry McCoy points out that the Street Crimes Unit is helping to increase police visibility and reduce crime in 3D. And by removing many active criminals from the street, the unit has also helped to bring about a reduction in radio runs, which free up officers for more proactive patrols.

- ① Read this latest 3D success story at:
http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/3rd/ss_3dstreetcrimesunit.shtm
- ① For more information on the Third District in general, click on:
<http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/3rd/main.shtm>

WITH WINTER WEATHER UPON US, THE MPDC ENCOURAGES MOTORISTS TO DRIVE SAFELY

Now that DC is facing its first winter storm of the year, the MPDC and AAA Mid-Atlantic remind motorists to follow some common-sense preparations and safety tips. One of the most important things that drivers can do is to ensure that their vehicles are winterized, with checks not only of the engine and battery, but also tires, windshield wipers and fluid, and an emergency kit. Once you're on the road, drivers should practice these basic safety precautions:

- Reduce your speed and increase the distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you.
- Avoid abrupt lane changes, turns or other maneuvers—and pay extra attention to other drivers who may do these things.
- If you skid on ice, don't panic. First, take your foot off the brake or accelerator. Second, don't "fight" the car and instead steer into the direction it is traveling to regain traction. Third, begin to accelerate slowly.
- To brake on ice and snow, remember which kind of braking system you have: with anti-lock brakes, keep the pedal depressed and do not pump the brakes; if you do not have anti-lock brakes, then apply the brakes firmly. If the brakes start to lock up, slowly release the brake pedal until the tires are no longer skidding and you can feel them braking properly again.
- Guard against "SUV overconfidence." While four-wheel-drive vehicles do a good job gaining traction, SUV drivers can experience difficulty keeping control and stopping, just as the drivers of other vehicles.
- Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle to include a flashlight, flares or reflective triangles, jumper cables, a first-aid kit, blankets or extra clothing, kitty litter or sand, and a snow shovel.

WATCH OUT FOR PICKPOCKETS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

A professional pickpocket is not necessarily the sleazy person lurking in dark doorways that we may expect. He (or she!) is likely to be an "average" person in both appearance and manner. Because of their chosen "line of work," pickpockets spend a great deal of time studying how to blend into a crowd, thus reducing the possibility of detection before they can get away. And during the holiday season, pickpockets can be out in full force—trying to blend in with the crowds and targeting easy victims. For example, teams of thieves are often at work during the holidays. A common "MO" is for one thief to "accidentally" get stuck in a revolving door or drop an item on the sidewalk—at which point, the partner picks the wallet or purse of an unsuspecting victim who has stopped to help. Many thieves also target individuals who are overburdened with packages.

NEWS & NOTES

Live at Five. Chief Ramsey discusses public safety issues with host Latoya Foster and takes phone calls during the "Live at Five" program on WOL radio (1450-AM), on Monday, December 8, from 5–6 pm. Details at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/media/media.shtm>.

COPS Tree Lighting. On Monday, December 8, at 6:30 pm, Chief Ramsey joins the DC Chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors to light a Christmas tree in front of MPDC headquarters, 300 Indiana Avenue, NW. And to remember officers who have been killed in the line of duty, COPS is encouraging residents to decorate with blue light bulbs this holiday season.

GLBT Diversity Training Roundtable. Residents interested in discussing the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) diversity training provided to MPDC officers are invited to a community roundtable at the University of the District of Columbia on Wednesday, December 10, at 7 pm. Details at <http://glu.gaydc.net/newsroom/index.htm#roundtable>.

- ① For a more detailed list of winter driving safety tips, courtesy of AAA Mid-Atlantic, go to: <http://www.aaamidatlantic.com/press/articles.asp?id=1221>
- ① For other traffic safety tips that you can use during winter and throughout the years, visit the MPDC website at: <http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/traffic.shtm>

- ① Learn more about the ways of pickpockets and thieves, and what you can do to protect yourself, by going to: http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/street/theft_pickpockets.shtm
- ① For a more complete list of winter holiday safety tips for shoppers, travelers and when you're at home, visit: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/season/winter.shtm>

DATA BOX

Homicides (as of 12/5/03)

- 2003: 227
- 2002: 244
- % Change: -7.0%

Adult Arrests (week end. 11/29/03)

- Total: 605
 - Drugs: 84
 - Motor Vehicle Theft: 13
 - Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 12
- Firearm Recoveries (as of 12/2/03)

- Total: 1,815
- December: 14
- November: 173

Traffic Fatalities (as of 11/28/03)

- 2003: 61
- 2002: 49
- % Change: +24.5%

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at kevin.morison@dc.gov. Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

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